



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

HUMANITIES INITIATIVES AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Humanities Initiatives program makes grants of up to \$100,000. The grant period ranges between one and three years. It may begin as early as April 1, 2016, but it must begin by September 1, 2016.

Deadline: August 24, 2015 (for projects beginning no later than September 2016)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.162

Items referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

- ☐ Budget instructions
- ☐ Budget form
- ☐ Sample budget
- ☐ Grants.gov application package and instructions

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

Preliminary sketches and draft proposals (optional)

Program staff recommends that preliminary sketches be submitted by June 24, 2015, and draft proposals no later than July 24, 2015. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing preliminary sketches and draft proposals submitted after those dates. The form to use for the sketch is available on the [program resource page](#). Preliminary sketches and drafts should be submitted to hi@neh.gov.

Questions?

Contact the staff of NEH's Division of Education Programs at 202-606-8471 and hi@neh.gov. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, as it takes time for your registration to be processed.

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another award term. In order for you to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in your Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record [here](#). You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicants update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity record at least four weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

NEH Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges are intended to strengthen the teaching and study of the humanities in subjects such as history, philosophy, and literature. These grants may be used to enhance existing humanities programs, resources, or courses, or to develop new ones.

NEH Humanities Initiatives may

- create opportunities for faculty members to study together, in order to improve their capacity to teach the humanities;
- support new humanities programs (which may include but are not limited to new humanities minors, first-year seminars, and capstone courses), and enhance existing ones;

- support humanities contributions to professional training (in such fields as business, law, economics, technology, and nursing and medicine);
- develop bridge programs for at-risk and nontraditional students;
- help institutions take advantage of humanities resources, especially in the digital humanities; and
- support collaborative projects in the humanities between the applicant institution and another institution, such as a college or university, a school or school system, a museum or library, or a historical or cultural society.

Each project must be organized around a core topic or set of themes. For examples, see the sample project narratives, which are available on the [program resource page](#).

Applicants are encouraged to draw on the knowledge of outside scholars who would contribute expertise and fresh insights to the project.

The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square

NEH invites projects related to its new initiative, The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square. This initiative seeks to connect the study of the humanities to the current conditions of national life. Many of today's challenges require more than ever the forms of understanding and knowledge represented by the humanities. They require the broadest possible engagement of scholars and the public with the resources of the humanities, including but not limited to the study of language, literature, history, philosophy, comparative religion, and ethics. The study of the humanities can help illuminate the complexity of many contemporary challenges while enriching our understanding of the common good.

Note that the Common Good initiative incorporates the [Standing Together](#) initiative, which encourages projects related to war and military service.

More information about the Common Good initiative is available [here](#).

All applications will be given equal consideration in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria (listed below in Section V of these guidelines), whether or not they respond to the Common Good initiative or the Standing Together initiative.

The Humanities Initiatives program does not support

- projects that advocate a particular program of social action;
- projects that seek to promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;
- projects that center on pedagogical theory or methods; or
- projects that center on producing works in the creative or performing arts.

II. Award Information

Successful applicants for NEH Humanities Initiatives may be awarded up to \$100,000.

The grant period may run between twelve and thirty-six months, depending on the project, but it must begin between April 1, 2016, and September 1, 2016, to accommodate travel to the project directors' meeting.

III. Eligibility

This program accepts applications from community colleges and post-secondary two-year institutions. Any U.S. nonprofit tax-exempt two-year college is eligible to apply.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Collaboration with other organizations is welcome, but the project director must be from an eligible institution.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Applicants are encouraged to contact program officers, who can offer advice about preparing the proposal and review preliminary sketches and proposal drafts, if they are submitted at the appropriate deadlines: June 24, 2015, for preliminary sketches, and July 24, 2015, for proposal drafts. The program cannot guarantee that it will respond to late-arriving sketches and drafts.

Although this preliminary review is not part of the formal review process and has no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, previous applicants have found it helpful in strengthening their applications.

The submission of preliminary sketches and proposal drafts is optional; if you choose to submit one (or both), send it as an attachment to hi@neh.gov.

Please consult the documents on the [program resource page](#): the preliminary sketch form, the sample application narratives, the sample budget, and the FAQ document.

Once an applicant formally submits an application, NEH will not comment on its status except with respect to issues of completeness and eligibility.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Applicants should begin by reading the evaluation criteria listed below in Section V.

The application should be clear, free of jargon, and accessible to nonspecialists. Applicants should refrain from proposing advocacy and other activities not supported by NEH (listed above, at the end of Section I of the guidelines).

An application consists of the following five parts: the table of contents, a summary, a narrative, a budget, and appendices.

1. **Table of contents**

Include all parts of the application, with page numbers. Pages should be numbered consecutively through all sections, including the appendices.

2. **Summary**

Provide a single-spaced summary of the narrative (no longer than one page).

3. **Narrative**

The narrative—an extended discussion of the project’s content, activities, and intended audience—is the most important part of the application.

Limit the narrative to ten double-spaced pages with one-inch margins and a font size no smaller than twelve points. Include the following sections.

- **Intellectual rationale**

Identify the topic that the project will address, and the audience that it will reach. Explain why the topic is important, and how the project will improve the quality of humanities teaching and learning at the institution.

- **Content and design**

Describe the project’s humanities content in detail, discussing the topics that will be explored. Describe the project activities and the texts and resources to be used, and explain why they were chosen. Use an appendix to provide a plan of work, a list of readings, and a schedule of activities.

- **Project personnel**

Identify the project director(s) and staff, lead scholars, and consultants. Define their roles and state their qualifications. In an appendix provide résumé(s) (no longer than five pages) for the project director(s) and biographies or brief résumés (no longer than two pages) for other personnel.

Include in the appendix up-to-date letters or e-mails of commitment from key scholars and consultants, in which they describe their anticipated contributions to the project.

- **Institutional context**

Briefly describe your institution: its humanities program, curricular history, students, faculty, and resources.

Briefly show how the resources (for example, faculty, library, or archival or museum holdings) of the participating institution(s) support the project. Describe any previous efforts to address the objectives of the project. If the proposal is related to a project previously funded by NEH, describe how the current effort builds on past work, and include in an appendix an evaluation of the initial project (for example, the final narrative report).

If more than one institution is involved, describe any previous and proposed collaboration and include in an appendix letters (or e-mails) of commitment and support from each institution.

- **Follow-up and dissemination**

Describe the anticipated long-term impact of the project and any activities planned to take place after the grant period. These activities may include workshops with colleagues, presentations at conferences, or dissemination of new curricula. If digital materials will be developed, describe arrangements for maintaining them.

- **Evaluation**

Explain how you will determine whether the project is meeting its expectations both during and after the grant period. Define the benchmarks for evaluating ongoing activities and the criteria for assessing the impact of the project. Outside evaluation is not required for NEH Humanities Initiatives grants.

4. **Budget**

Complete the budget form. You can find links to the budget instructions, budget form, and sample budget on the sidebar of the [program resource page](#). If you wish, you may

attach separate pages with notes to explain any of the budget items in more detail. Applicants are advised to retain a copy of their budget form.

Applicants may include in their budgets grant funds to pay for travel expenses and honoraria for guest scholars and visiting consultants, books and other materials, modest purchases of computer equipment and materials directly related to the project, logistical support, staff salaries during project pilot phases, and release time for the project director. Applicants should also include in their budgets remuneration for project participants, based on their involvement in and contribution to the project.

The following is additional guidance for preparing your budget.

- **Item 1: Salaries and wages**

Include all project personnel employed by the applicant institution. Calculations for faculty compensation must conform to the policies of the institution. Commonly, the budget includes a percentage of academic year or annual salary for those faculty members participating in the project. Such amounts may be used to release faculty members from normal duties for a specified amount of time or, alternatively, to pay them for time that they devote to the project over and above their normal duties. In some cases, such as professional development activities conducted in the summer, a uniform stipend may be provided for faculty participation. In no case, however, may this grant support replacement teachers or pay faculty members for performing their regular duties. Compensation for support staff may be calculated as a percentage of salary or based on an hourly rate.

Salary compensation for employees of the applicant institution should be shown in the project budget as follows:

- For project directors during the academic year, release time normally should not exceed one course per quarter or semester.
- For project directors during the summer, compensation is based on a percentage of the director's academic year salary. For example, one month of full-time work would equal one-ninth or 11.1 percent of a nine-month academic year salary.
- Faculty who participate in a workshop or have other responsibilities in implementing the project may receive stipends, typically \$100 per day or \$500 on completion of a week-long summer workshop, or as appropriate for other responsibilities in a project.

- **Item 2: Fringe benefits**

Fringe benefits may include contributions for social security, employee insurance, pension plans, etc. Only those benefits that are not included in an organization's indirect-cost pool (discussed in Item 8 below) may be shown as direct costs.

- **Item 3: Consultant fees**

List individuals contributing to the project as visiting lecturers or leaders of faculty study sessions. The honoraria for visiting faculty and other consultants range from \$350 to \$750 per person per day or up to a maximum of \$3,750 per person per week, not including travel and subsistence costs. Travel and subsistence costs should be entered under budget Item 4.

- **Item 4: Travel**

Calculate travel and subsistence costs, including participant travel, in conformity with institutional policy. The lowest available commercial fares for coach or equivalent accommodations must be used.

All air travel that is paid in whole or in part with NEH funds must be undertaken on U.S. flag air carriers. For further information on travel requirements, please see the articles on [Travel Costs](#) and [Foreign Travel](#) in the [General Terms and Conditions for Awards](#).

All project directors will attend a planning meeting at NEH's offices in Washington, D.C. Directors should budget accordingly for a one-day meeting for the first year of the requested grant period. Other project leaders may wish to attend the meeting; if so, their expenses should also be detailed here.

- **Item 5: Supplies and materials**

List all purchases of consumable supplies, materials to be used in the project, and items of expendable equipment (that is, equipment costing less than \$5,000 and with an estimated useful life of less than one year) to be purchased with grant funds. Eligible items include supplies, such as computer and instructional materials, educational software, etc. Please note that costs for these items may be included only if they are not part of the indirect-cost pool (discussed in Item 8 below). See also the list of "Inadmissible Budget Items" below.

- **Item 6: Services**

Services include the cost of duplication and printing, long-distance telephone charges and postage, rental of films and equipment, technical support, rental of buses and vans for site visits, and subcontracts of any kind. The costs of project

activities to be undertaken by a third-party contractor should be included in this category as a single line item charge. Append to the budget a complete itemization of the costs comprising the charge. If there is more than one contractor, each must be listed (as a separate line item under “Services”) on the budget form, and the costs must be itemized separately. If you plan to collaborate with another institution, the grants office of the applicant institution may wish to consult with the NEH Office of Grant Management.

- **Item 7: Other costs**

Faculty participants not employed by the applicant institution receive set stipends commensurate with their expected time commitment. Such stipends should be included in this budget item. Also include purchases of permanent equipment (defined as equipment having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more). Equipment is to be used solely for project activities during the life of the grant and is not intended for personal use.

(Reminder: consultant fees are entered under budget Item 3.)

- **Item 8: Indirect costs (overhead)**

These are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be readily identified with a specific project or activity of an organization. Typical examples of indirect costs are the salaries of executive officers, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, local telephone service, office supplies, and accounting and legal services.

Indirect costs are computed by applying a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (usually the direct costs of the project). If your institution already has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate, please indicate on the budget form the rate, the base, the name of the federal agency with which the agreement was negotiated, and the date of the agreement. If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs, please submit a copy of its current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to Form 5, the Budget Narrative Attachment Form. (See the instructions for Form 5 in the Application Checklist at the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to Form 5, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; or c) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs. (See the first bullet below.)

If your organization does not have a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate or has not submitted a pending indirect-cost proposal to a federal agency, you may choose one of the following options, if you wish to include overhead charges in the budget:

- NEH will not require the formal negotiation of an indirect-cost rate, provided that the charge for indirect costs does not exceed 10 percent of direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each individual subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000). This option is not available to sponsorship (umbrella) organizations. If you choose this option, you must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.
- If your organization wishes to use a rate higher than 10 percent, you must provide an estimate of the indirect-cost rate and the charges on the budget form. If the application is approved for funding, NEH will provide instructions in the award document on how to negotiate an indirect-cost rate with NEH.

If you choose one of these two options, please indicate on your budget form that you are doing so.

- **Inadmissible budget items**

The following costs are not allowable and may not appear in project budgets:

- the cost of replacement teachers or compensation for faculty members performing their regular duties;
- the rental of recreational facilities and costs related to social events such as banquets, receptions, and entertainment;
- tuition fees for participants; and
- the cost of travel associated with scholarly research unrelated to the project.

- **Budget narrative (optional)**

If needed, include a brief supplement to the budget, explaining projected expenses or other items in the financial information provided on the budget form.

5. **Appendices**

Use appendices to provide the following materials:

- the plan of work, a schedule of activities, and a list of readings for the project;

- résumé(s) (five pages each) for the project director(s), and brief résumés or biographies (two pages each) for and letters (or e-mails) of commitment from each scholar involved in the project;
- letters or e-mails of commitment from each institution involved in the project, including the applicant institution;
- a one-page appendix providing a brief institutional history, as well as key institutional data, including number of faculty, number of departments, graduate programs (if applicable), student enrollments, etc.;
- an evaluation of the initial project, if the proposal is related to a project previously funded by NEH; and
- if applicable, a list of materials to be mailed separately (that is, those that cannot be submitted electronically via Grants.gov).

Include only relevant information concisely presented. Each appendix should be identified clearly and listed in the table of contents. Remember that pages should be numbered consecutively through all sections, including the appendices. The proposal narrative should refer to items included in the appendices or samples of digital work.

Projects proposing a digital component (for example, a website, or DVD) may wish to provide samples that demonstrate the proposed component and its relationship to the goals of the project. Applicants may provide a website address, screen shots, or material on DVD (eight copies). Any samples that cannot be included in the Grants.gov application must be sent to the NEH Division of Education Programs. (See How to Submit Supplementary Materials, below.)

Use the Application Checklist to verify completion of all parts of the application.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. Links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package can be found on the sidebar of the [program resource page](#).

HOW TO SUBMIT SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

If you are sending supplementary materials (those that cannot be submitted electronically), please send **eight copies of each item** and include in your Grants.gov submission a list of the materials to be sent separately. Label each item with the name of the project director, the applicant institution, and the title of the project. When applicable, include operating instructions.

Send the materials to:

NEH Humanities Initiatives
Division of Education Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8471

NEH continues to experience lengthy delays in the delivery of mail by the U.S. Postal Service, and in some cases materials are damaged by the irradiation process. We recommend that supplementary materials be sent by a commercial delivery service to ensure that they arrive by the receipt deadline.

If you wish to have the materials returned to you, please include a self-addressed, pre-paid mailer.

DEADLINES

Preliminary sketches and draft proposals (optional): Program staff recommends that preliminary sketches be submitted by June 24, 2015, and draft proposals by July 24, 2015. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing sketches and draft proposals submitted after those dates. Staff comments in response to draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, but previous applicants have found them helpful in strengthening their applications. Preliminary sketches and drafts should be submitted to hi@neh.gov. The form for preliminary sketches is available on the [program resource page](#).

Applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before August 24, 2015.

Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted. Supplementary materials must also arrive at NEH on or before August 24, 2015, to be considered as part of the application.

V. Application Review

Proposals for NEH Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges are evaluated according to three general criteria: intellectual quality, design quality, and potential for significant impact.

- **Intellectual quality**
 - Does the project center on a significant topic in the humanities?
 - Does the project engage important texts and draw on sound scholarship in the humanities?

- Does the project effectively address the pertinent issues of teaching and learning in its subject area in the humanities?
- Is the proposal clear, free of jargon, and accessible to nonspecialists?
- Does the project refrain from proposing advocacy and other activities not supported by NEH (listed above, at the end of Section I of the guidelines)?
- **Design quality**
 - Is the project well planned, with its activities described in adequate detail?
 - Are the personnel qualified to carry out their responsibilities?
 - Do the letters or e-mails from scholars, other consultants, and participating institutions show evidence of commitment to, support for, and anticipated contributions to the project?
 - Is the proposed evaluation appropriate to the project?
 - Is the budget reasonable in view of the project design and likely results?
- **Potential for significant impact**
 - Will the project lead to opportunities for enhanced humanities teaching and learning?
 - Will the results be disseminated to those who would find them most useful?
 - Will the results extend beyond the period of the grant?

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available [here](#).

VI. Award Administration Information

Applicants will be notified of the decision by e-mail in March 2016. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in April 2016. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The [Grant Management](#) section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their proposals by sending an e-mail message to hi@neh.gov.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions about the program, contact:

Division of Education Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8471
hi@neh.gov

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.grants.gov
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html>
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.
- ☐ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.
- ☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The [program resource page](#) on NEH's website has a direct link to the package (on the sidebar, below the Guidelines Resources heading). Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page sidebar also has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.
- ☐ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**
 1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational
 2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs
 3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form
 4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:
 - ATTACHMENT 1: Table of contents (name the file “contents.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 2: One-page summary (name the file “summary.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 3: Narrative (name the file “narrative.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 4: Budget (name the file “budget.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 5: Appendices (name the file “appendices.pdf”)
 - ☐ A plan of work, a schedule of activities, and a list of readings for the project

- ☐ Résumé(s) (five pages each) for the project director(s), and brief résumés or biographies (two pages each) for and letters or e-mails of commitment from each scholar involved in the project
 - ☐ Letters or e-mails of commitment from each institution involved in the project
 - ☐ A one-page appendix providing a brief institutional history, as well as key institutional data, including number of faculty, number of departments, student enrollments, etc.
 - ☐ An evaluation of the initial project, if the proposal is related to a project previously funded by NEH
 - ☐ If applicable, a list of materials to be mailed separately (that is, those that cannot be submitted electronically via Grants.gov)
5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of the applicant institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the [program resource page](#), for additional information.)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs [here](#).

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on [federal holidays](#)), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.